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THE CHOSEN NATION

By

IRWIN ST. JOHN TUCKER

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THE CHOSEN NATION

BY

IRWIN ST. JOHN TUCKER

TO

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT

A SCHOLAR UNAFRAID

Published by
THE AUTHOR
1541 Unity Building, Chicago

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FOREWORD

This poem was completed in Judge Landis' court-room in Chicago, during the trial for "conspiracy to obstruct the draft" which resulted in a verdict of "guilty" against myself and four other Socialists; the others being Adolph Germer, national executive secretary of the Socialist Party; J. Louis Engdahl, editor of The American Socialist; William F. Kruse, national secretary of the Young People's Socialist League; and Victor L. Berger, congressman-elect from Milwaukee.

The poem contains in condensed form all that I know of history, and likewise my view of the present and hope of the future. Historical references contained in it are amplified in my historical lectures, most of which have been published, under the titles following, and may be obtained from this office:

INTERNATIONALISM: The Problem of the Hour. Five Lectures.

1. The German Idea; Deutschland Ueber Alles.
2. The British Idea; Britannia Rules the Waves.
3. The American Idea; Phrases versus Facts.
4. The Russian Idea; the Proletarian Revolution.
5. The Labor Idea: History and Future of the International.

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THE MARTYR PEOPLES. Six Lectures.

1. Israel; the Crucible of God.
2. Serbia; the Valley of Division.
3. Armenia; a Splendid Sepulchre.
4. Poland; a Divided Soul.
5. Belgium; the Storm Center.
6. Ireland; the Sorrowful Mother.

IMPERIALISM: The Curse of the World.

I. Founders of Imperialism.

1. Egypt; the United States of the Nile.
2. Chaldaea; the Strife of the Cities.
3. Persia; the Spirit of the Mountains.
4. Greece; the Empire of the Mind.
5. Rome; the Mistress of the World.

II. Modern Imperialism.

1. France; the Daughter of the Empire.
2. Islam; the Spirit of the Desert.
3. Spain; the Shadow of the Moor.
4. Austria; the House of Hapsburg.
5. Great Britain; the Empire of Finance.

By the verdict of "Guilty," delivered on January 8, 1919, I ceased to be a citizen of the United States, until such time as the farce of a trial, with its perjuries, coercion and bribery of witnesses, and jury carefully handpicked by the prosecution, is declared null and void, and the verdict is reversed.

But I am still, and shall forever remain, a citizen of the International Commonwealth.

IRWIN ST. JOHN TUCKER.

Done on my Thirty-third Birthday, January 10, 1919.

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THE CHOSEN NATION

I. THE ASSEMBLY.

1

The Council of Nations

War had dragged out his fourth and bloodiest year;
While still on us that fouling horror dwelt
Like poisonous clinging mist in hollows drear,
White towering peaks the golden sunlight felt
And THEY who dwell thereon saw dawn appear;
As, long before, they saw wild lightnings glow
With coming storm though yet our sky seemed clear.
And while blood-toll was paid of death and woe,
I saw the nations' souls to consultation go.

2

A peak stands midmost of the rocky sea
That rims the world, from white Alaskan floes
Begirt with death and frozen mystery
To Tierra del Fuego's firelit snows.
Its age-enduring stone, ice-foaming high,
Auroras gild without, and gold within.
Far mid the six months' night its tides begin
Where flames Arcturus from the middle sky;
Where they at last are stilled, the Southern cross hangs nigh.

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3

Thereon great glory gathered far appeared
Against the joy of sky-suffusing light;
Thence, as my mortal wavering vision cleared
THEY shone, as dawns the moon upon midnight
Through cloudy tempest-wrack in hurtling flight.
Across their ranks quick-changing colors play
As when the sunbeams through gray shadows smite
Upon the Veil across Yosemité,
And shimmering rainbows crown the glory of its spray.

4

And gazing long on those who seemed the chief,
A dawning recognition broke on me;
I knew them all—O knowledge past belief,
For I beyond myself exalt and free
Remembered what I knew not, and could see
Things future heaving hugely to the sky
As tempest-blue horizons distant rear
Above close-ringing summits to the eye
Of strong-winged eagles who on soaring currents fly.

5

The Young Nations

Familiar to my sight their faces shone
Through this high vision seen; and I could mark
Storm-bred Britannia, her great trident gone,
Her sea-blue eyes with ruffling tempest dark;
And France, with woeful visage wild and stark,
With tears of blood bedewed; and lo! beside
Germania sat aghast, like them who hark
To echoes of past madness that hath died;
But greatness seemed to dawn through death of bloody pride.

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6

Russia was there, with bloodmarks on her brow,
The halo of new wonder round her still;
White glory of young freedom struggling now
With mazement of the treachery that can kill
By friendly smile that cloaks a murderous will;
There China sat, a giant childlike power,
Fast wakening to portentous good or ill;
Japan close by, a watchful fiery flower,
Waiting and guardful still for some predestined hour.

7

The Elder Nations

But mid the majesty of that array
Were some who struck my soul with deeper awe.
For nations that long since have passed away
From company of those who make earth's law,
As visitants from other orbs I saw.
There purified from taint of earth they come
From earth's new struggles strength renewed to draw.
Like elder children gathering to their home,
Dark mystic Egypt sat, and proud imperial Rome.

8

There immemorial India, dreaming on,
Dusk-eyed with legend, the exalted face
Beheld of tower-fronted Babylon.
The mountain-loving soul of Persia's race
Communed of timeless truth with warrior Greece.
Amid them now the stricken shape appears
Of Israel, as one whose hope can trace,—
Steadfast in sorrow through long tortured years,—
Her triumph ripe at last, the harvest of her tears.

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9

And Races Forgotten

Like distant peaks, faint on the purple skies,
Now huge vague shapes upon my knowledge swelled,
With strange barbaric faces, in whose eyes
Slept awful centuries of hoary eld.
Nations so old, their story none hath spelled;
Surely about their gold-encinctured hair
Hung rolling mists agleam, like clouds beheld;
And their huge names, like chords that shake the sphere,
Smote deep and vague on my uncomprehending ear.

10

You who have stood on Inspiration Point
And seen the Yellowstone's tremendous gorge
Cleave through old earth's foundations, course and joint
Laid deep by toiling aeons strong and large;
Who dizzy on the Canyon's windswept marge
Watched wonders unbelievable displayed
Long-wrought on God's sun-flaming jewel-forge;
You know what wondering awe that cannot fade
Gript me, to see thus bare Time's living strata laid.

11.

Yea, you will ask me, "Then how came you there?"
Even while the law of fools, with savage blight
Smote wild at freedom's dawn, in blinded fear,
Came one immortal, fair, with blessèd light
To my law-weary eyes, which hailed the sight;
For oft in wonder through the plains far-spread
Of vanished years, that from the thickening dust

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Rear their forgotten glories, she hath led
Me, momently immortal, though but dust.

12

As burns the herald star of God's new day
Against intensest darkness of old gloom,
She hung, and through sick death her voice broke way
Clear as through morning mist rings reveille.
One word she spoke, a kindling summons: "Come!"
And like god-flushing cordial, or the strain
Of some deep draught of throbbing poetry
That shakes the soul a strength unknown to gain,
Her life poured into mine, thrilled every drop and vein.

13

Such is the burning wine of her sweet breath,
Whereof who tastes is more than other men;
Cursed with a blessèd madness like to death
Because he cannot walk the earth again
Picking his steps with careful now-and-then
Amongst the things a mortal needs must see;
But ever in the forefront of his ken
Sweep vision-armies of the past, which he,
Beholding, is enwrapped with fatal ecstasy.

14

For as a vineyard, spread on pleasant hills,
Bears myriad grapes of luscious ruddy vein,
Whose blood forth-poured to cordial rare distils;
In whose rich warmth all sunshine, wind and rain
That ever shone or blew or beat amain

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In wintry tempest or from summer sky
  Is mingled and immortal, joy with pain;
So in her soul commingled lives for aye
The wine of souls of men, through centuries foaming high.

15

Within my quickened vision stood the past,
  All Memory's weird and limitless array,
In rich phantasmagoria dim and vast;
  Far-flaming wreck of empires stormed away,
  Victors and victims glittering in affray
On dire tremendous battlefields of old;
  White-wingèd fleets on some forbidden sea
In pearly oceans sunk with all their gold;
Nations set wild with joy, or lapped in mourning cold;

16

Strange myriads bowed adoring to their god
  In rock-hewn temples of the infant world;
White Druids chanting o'er a blood-stained sod;
  Wild hate-hymns screamed where battling standards whirled;
  Te Deums sung o'er battle-flags new-furled;
Legends and songs that tell a nation's dole;
  Like ocean's roar in some small shell enswirled
All these resounded echoing in my soul
From that huge sea of songs which through her being roll.

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II. THE DEBATE.

1

On rocky peaks high into heaven piled
That glorious convocation gathered far,
Yet pleasant was the atmosphere and mild.
No footstep might the snow's white beauty mar
Of all that host, for they immortal are.
Beneath the glittering Polestar undefiled
So shines in Northern night the Arctic glare
On waste Niagaras wonderful and wild,
Nameless in silent snow, where it is death to dare.

2

Germany Speaks

But strong emotion shook them while I gazed,
For fateful consultation brought them there;
The light that shone around them changeful blazed,
Now shimmering bright, now charged with baleful glare,
As changed the burden each oration bare.
Now spoke Germania; not with mortal tongue,
But even as from the universal air,
Whose pure and mighty bosom pulsing rung,
As though an organ's tubes from peak to sky were flung.

3

"You called me mad; 't was true! I ask you then
Whence came the madness that hath stricken me?
You know that out of frozen marsh and fen,
From fjord and forest round the northern sea,

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My tribes poured down on Rome's proud majesty
And took an empire. Wotan was my guide,
Thor was my strength, and Tir my bravery.
But I, victorious, cast these gods aside,
And took from Rome her Christ;—what did me then betide?

4

"By feuds of Christians was I rent asunder
When emperors and princes for me strove.
Those thirty years my soul was trodden under,
And iron tortures through my heart were rove,
While Catholic and Lutheran sought to prove
Their doctrine's truth by rapine, blood and fire;
That deep disunion long within me throve,
Palsying my hands, and thwarting all desire.
Three centuries barely healed what those years wrought so dire.

5

"Then, then old Wotan called me from his storms,
And Thor's deep thunders muttered in my brain
Their stalwart legends stirred with ancient charms,
And woke old fires within my blood again.
Meanwhile ye ringed me with a tightening chain,
Ye who had prospered while my hands were weak.
Ye took the world, dividing it amain,
And barred me every way I went to seek;
And then, outskilled in words, I called Thor's sword to speak!"

6

Belgium Demands a Reason

"What sought ye then through me?" A passionate cry

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Rang through the vault, whence Belgium shook
with pain.
"Of worldly domination what had I
Could tempt ambition such as yours to gain?
My people's piteous woes, my babies slain,
My king dethroned, what worth were these to you?"
"You chose that way," her conqueror said;
"your bane
Was trust in England's faith. The sword you drew
She forced into your hands;—such trust her victims rue!"

7

Hot spake that gray old mother, at whose call
Nations stood up, and girdled all the seas
With battleships and untried armies tall;
"What madmen's lies, what crazed deceits are
these?
Could I stand idle and behold you seize
The key to my security and might?
Thus would you have me beaten to my knees.
Beside, my oath was sworn like Christian knight
From tyrant powers to save small nations in their
plight."

8

Ireland Mocks

Then rang a bitter laugh athwart the skies.
"Twixt treachery, then, and outrage, must we
choose?"
Cried Ireland, flashing fire from wild gray eyes.
"That stale hypocrisy all empires use
To cloak their crimes of insolent abuse.
With drop for drop can I match Belgium's blood,
Because we both an alien yoke refuse.

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But for four years she on Golgotha stood,
Seven centuries have I groaned in England's martyrhood!"

9

France Speaks

"Is this a time for prating of old wrong?"
France spoke, her face with wrath and blood aflame.
"The world is weary of such ancient song.
This new thing jarred the whole earth from its frame.
Here on my sacred soil barbarians came.
While they remain, no other cause I see
But drive them out! Sure honor hath gone lame
When woes of little nations such as ye
Distract the world's resolve from France's victory!"

10

Morocco Replies

Then stirred remembrance in that wondrous host;
But one spoke clear, with still reflective tone;
"There was a time, when on my ancient coast
The foot of France was planted, and the moan
Of myriad victims wailed, and many a bone
Bleached white in desert sands where she had trod.
She scorched the snows, and grasped hot India's zone;
Not yet hath she retired to her own sod."
Morocco spoke, unmoved, within a snow-white hood.

11.

But France replied, her stately form aquiver;
"I blessed you with a gift you had not seen.

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My culture flowed upon you like a river,
Turning your desert to a garden green.
Sunk in your past, musing on what hath been,
You knew not what is now. My armies came
And stirred you to new life, whose lambent sheen
Lightens your darkness with a mounting flame.
Yea, and to India's shores would I have been the same!"

12

Serbia Pleads

"What then of me?" poor Serbia shrieked aloud
With agonized and piteous appeal.
"That was the boast which blackened like a cloud
Above me, borne on Austria's poisoned steel.
My ancient people felt the iron heel
Of Turk and Greek and Austrian crush them down.
Each had great offerings for my better weal;
Between them all, they robbed me of my crown;—
Yea, hear me now awhile of my antique renown.

13

"There is a valley cleaves the steep incline
Of Adriatic water's eastern shore,
Through mountain ranges whose stark rugged line
Bars Balkan valleys from the sea's salt roar.
Through that steep cleft the Drina river bore
The line that once divided Rome from Rome,
When Diocletian his vast empire tore.
Then Constantine beside the pleasant foam
Of Hellespontine straits made his imperial home.

14

"My people from their forests dim and vast
That fringe the wild Carpathian slopes descended
And into Rome's far-spreading borders passed.

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Pent in Byzantium, long so well defended,
The Eastern Caesar while our hosts impended
With shrunken armies could not check our flow.
We settled where his riven empire ended;
Far on both sides we watched our cities grow;
—But ah, that valley's course hath wrought the whole world's woe!

15

"For Empire strove with Empire, Rome with Rome,
The Church imperial likewise split in twain.
And we by course predestined had our home
Where raged the strife that made both faiths in vain.
To be one people all our hearts were fain,
But sharply were divided, creed from creed.
Then mid his Frankish warriors Charlemagne
Took western Caesar's crown; and from that deed
Sprang glorious Otho's line, and this dark Hapsburg breed.

16.

"Out rushed the Turk from yonder desert lair.
Constantinople fell, and Moscow's lord
Caught up the diadem down trodden there.
Fresh from his triumph o'er the Tartar horde
He took the Caesar's name, and swung his sword,
As champion of the Eastern Church's fanes.
But onward still Mohammed's warriors poured,
Till on the waste of dread Kossovo's plains
My glorious host went down, and left me in their chains.

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17

"That battle on these years marks deep its trace;
Bear with me while I tell of that fierce fray
When for the last time all our Slavic race,
United in one desperate array,
Fought, Catholic and Orthodox, to stay
The scourge of Islam. Prince Lazar, who lent
Last gleam of Dushan's empire-splendid day,
Captive was slain; the Sultan in his tent
Died by my hero's hand;—but all our strength was spent.

18

"Then long between three empires was I torn,
Three faiths and three ambitions fought for me.
Harsh triple chains into my heart were worn,
But still I hoped and struggled to be free.
Sultan and Czar and Kaiser claimed my fee,
But I fought on; with poet and with bard
I kept alight the fires of bravery.
Then—when so certain seemed my hope's reward!
It loosed that flame on me which hath the whole world scarred!"

19

Britain Again Explains

Then Britain spoke: "O poor beleaguered state,
It was your plight that wrung my heart so hard.
I could not leave you to your fearful fate,
But loosed my sword your piteous rights to guard."
"Who was it then," cried Serbia, "who that barred

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Great Russia forty years ago, when she
Broke down the Turk's foul power, and from the ward
Of his harsh mercies strove to set us free?
Who gave him back his sword, Britannia? Who—but thee?

20

"Accursed are all your empires!" At that word
Flung in the teeth of all those august powers,
A mighty movement through the great host stirred,
Like winds that sweep a field of poppy flowers
Beneath the skies of June, when heavy showers
Have weighted them with raindrops now outshaken.
Freed of that weight, each bud no longer cowers;
So every little state, new courage taken
From woeful Serbia's dare, seemed swiftly to awaken.

III. THE LUST OF GOLD.

1

Israel Speaks

And then amid that sudden murmuring gust
Another voice was lifted keen and sharp,
Like one who knows, when strange things are discussed.
There Israel stood upon a rocky scarp;—
No seat had she, but bore an ancient harp
Whose melody the whole world hearkens still.

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Her garment's weft was tears, of gold the warp;—
"Of empires long the world hath had its fill;
But will ye hark to me?" she spoke with sudden thrill.

2

"Back in the world's beginning forth I came
From that wide rocky desert, whose hot waste
Breeds wandering tribes, eternally the same.
I took that tiny land so strangely placed
Twixt desert, hill and ocean, while to east
Steep Jordan pours down to the Dead Salt Sea.
On every side with empires was I faced,
And but a few short decades was I free;
Egyptians ruled me now, and now the swart Chaldee.

3

"Assyria smote Chaldaea to the dust,
And then was smitten by proud Babylon's king.
Cyrus the Median vain Belshazzar thrust
Off from his throne—ah, hear my exiles sing!—
Then Alexander with his bristling ring
Of pitiless phalanxes o'er them whirled.
Epiphanes his hammer sought to swing,
But back was he by Maccabaeus hurled;
And then Rome's iron tramp subdued the whole round world.

4

"All of these bubble empires have I known,
Each thinking him eternal as the stars;
I dared forgotten Pharaohs on their throne,
Armed Julius Caesar for his Gallic wars,
And loaned these Balkan kings their debt to Mars.

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I saw them come and pass—and I remain;
Yea, though my face and back bear many scars.
When by Masada's fort I burned my slain,
There laid I down the sword, nor picked it up again."

5

Spain Taunts

"Yes, but a better weapon got you then;
Steel laid you down, but gold became your power!"
Thus, from her groves and vineyards, haughty Spain.
"Eight centuries long I struggled with the Moor
And found him leagued with you; till came the hour
When Spain must die, or Israel forth be scourged.
From beautiful Granada's orange bower
The canker of your gold-thirst clean I purged.
To cure sword-empire's wrongs, how shall gold-rule be urged?"

6

Israel Replies

"This is my curse," proud Israel replied
"That I to my own faith must be untrue.
From Zion through the world went far and wide
The Law my prophets heard, and gave to you,
Forbidding all gold-empire. Yea, all through
The dusk and horror that your empires left
My seers and sages held the great torch true,
And planned new worlds, where love should banish theft,
Even while they built on gold—of land and Temple reft!"

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7

Mexico and Peru Speak

"Of all the nations that the earth contains"
Came in stern accents from barbaric age,
"The last whose voice should lay such charge is Spain's.
Gold-thirst in her lit such devouring rage
Her record bloodiest flares on history's page.
Her conquerors on our lands, so rich and new,
Left pangs of cruelty time cannot assuage.
By blackened trail of fire and blood ye knew
Spain passed!" Thus Mexico; in answer groaned Peru.

8

Holland

"Nor only there her savage curse was laid;
Her Duke of Alva ringed my land with woe,"
Said she whose home the stout Lowlanders made,
Winning their farms from ocean's ebb and flow.
"Because my venturous navies dared invade
Where she desired to keep supreme control,
Beneath the color of a high Crusade,
She slew my thousands, to retain her trade.
Yet still my ships went forth where all the oceans roll."

9

Britannia spoke again: "That thing did I
When Spain's Armada darkened all my seas.
Before my ships her galleons turned to fly;
My sailors beat Spain's empire to her knees.
Europe was rid then of her proud decrees."
But Holland said with anger: "This to me?
Who struck me unawares in time of peace,

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And robbed me of my fruits of victory?
Besides, Spain's fleet was wrecked by tempest, not
by thee!"

10

Germany Speaks of Empire-Lust

Again Germania spoke, with knitted brow;
"Much evil have you said concerning me,
And this my quest for empire; tell me now,
Which, from that same ambition, has been free?
Where of you all was one content to be
The soul of one's own people, self-contained?
Gold-greed, sword-lust, madness for tribute-fee,
Whether Osiris, Christ or Allah reigned,
Ye thirsted all for power, and after conquest
strained!

11

"Yet hear me; for the story latest told
Bears hardly on me. When Columbus found
That New World all ablaze with gems and gold,
Spain's galleons from the sea's remotest round
Laden with treasure sailed for Cadiz bound.
Nations went wild with envy, but were tricked.
The shadowy Empire had a Spaniard crowned,
And emperor and Pope laid interdict
On all who dared infringe Spain's claim, held close
and strict.

12

"Like fell infection of some hot disease
That sets a sufferer with illusions wild,
That glint of gold, fresh mined in Southern seas
Tormented Europe; and like men beguiled
By swamp-light's lure to wallow, all defiled

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In marshes of decay; so every land
Went mad for gold. That Empire-fabric piled
Through centuries long by every statesman hand
All insufficient was, to curb that fierce demand.

13

"So fell our Empire, when upon us loomed
Those huge forgotten shapes beyond the dawn.
Cipango and Cathay and India doomed
The gray old order, like a garden lawn
Forgotten, with the guests adventuring gone.
But when thus riven our great Temple fell,
In its vast rift I was asunder drawn.
Why of the stones built ye for me a cell?
Grown strong, I burst the lock, at large with you to dwell."

14

"When madmen break their chains," Britannia said,
"And spread destruction over land and sea,
Forthwith a stronger prison must be made,
To hold them fettered there eternally.
The piteous wrecks of all my merchantry
Float strewn on all the oceans; and lo, there,
Where poor Armenia in her misery
Crouches too weak for tears. Mad that you were,
How shall we hence believe whatever oaths you swear?"

15

Armenia

But now Armenia struggled from her seat,
And horror struck me as I saw her stand;

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Wasted with death and terror, on her feet
She tottered; palsy shook her quivering hand.
Upon her brow starvation left its brand;
Her voice like them who moan from out the tomb,
So strained with woe we scarce could understand;
"Speak ye of me? Again my ancient home
Is all a grave beneath; drear heaven a charnel-dome.

16

"Since dawn of empire-hunger was I cursed,
Because my seat bestrides the ancient road
Whereby the Way to India was traversed
By caravans since first the piercing goad
Drove grunting camels, weary with their load
Of Egypt's grain for India's spice to trade.
Whoso controls me, rules that far abode
Of phantom glittering wealth; so was I made
Victim and hapless pawn of all that game who played.

17

"Self-righteous Britain, this black curse shall be
Stained on thy frontlet too; it was thy word
Which stayed the hand of Europe raised for me,
To halt the slaughters which this Turkish horde
Wrought on my helpless folk with fire and sword;
Because the Way to India might be won
By others, thou didst take the Turk abhorred,
This Turk whose name thou now dost spit upon—
To be thy faithful friend, thy India's gates to guard!

18

"But in this tangled game for India's gold
Now hath the German won the Turk from thee,

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And more my slaughters prosper than of old.
—Germans and English are one breed to me!
Roman and Greek and Parthian and Chaldee—
They all are empire-mad; and all will kill
And burn and torture, wrecking earth and sea
To win that power which curses with its hell
Both them who win, and them who by its fury fell!"

19

Islam

"Who dare call me barbarian?"—Islam spoke;—
"Of scattered tribes I could an Empire rear
Against whose walls crusading armies broke
Like shattered waves. With poet, sage and seer
I kept the torch of knowledge burning clear
When darkness covered Europe. What were ye
When Haroun Raschid ruled the Persian mere?
Your Renaissance was lit with sparks from me;
I dared Columbus turn to breast the Western sea!"

IV. THE NATURE OF EMPIRE.

1

China Asks Concerning the Nature of the Empire

Now wild commotion stirred that glorious host
Like oceans where cross-currents strive and ply,
When cresting waves, by quartering storm-winds tossed,
Thunder three ways, and hurl their white foam high;
In answering tumult shook the flaming sky;

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But then a quiet voice cleft through the storm,
And China, from her slumbering centuries shy,
With strange old garments gathered round her form,
Spoke slowly; and the noise stilled as by potent charm.

2

"Much am I puzzled by this high debate
To know what is the prize for which you strive.
Upon your ways I wakened very late.
And not yet have I learned; but I shall thrive
Upon this wondrous knowledge that you drive
Hard into me, whether I will or no.
This is the wonderment that I derive
From your debate; your wars flame to and fro
In Empire-quest. What *is* this thing that lures you so?

3

"Lo, all the horrors of this present hate;—
Your splendid millions crushed to bloody mire,
Vast agony, nameless sufferers desolate,
Nations destroyed, cities laid waste with fire.
Here has been told the record, long and dire
Of former wars, weary with endless waste;
And yet the goal ye sought seems no whit nigher.
What good was ever gained, that has replaced
Those lives and tears ye spent, those splendors all effaced?"

4

Britannia Claims Eternal Rule

There was a silence; then Britannia rose,
Stately and tall, in garments gold and gray.

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"Link not this war," she said, "with all of those
Whereof the story has been told today.
The Empire that I seek, like that I sway,
I hold not for my glory nor my gain.
Germania's greed, like Rome's, must pass away,
As passed the shadowy grandeurs of old Spain;
But my Empire must grow, and must unmoved
remain;

5

"For they all sought to rule for pride of power;
They crushed subjected nations under heel;
But those who bear my rule, thrive hour by hour—
I bless them by my lordship, for their weal,
And ceaseless nourish them, with tireless zeal.
It is a burden I am called to bear
By that high Destiny, beyond appeal,
Which laid on me a guardian's tender care.
Nerved by this trust, all these unselfish wars I
dare;"—

6

Thus far she spoke; then on the night arose
A laughter such as surely never rung
In all the ages through the patient snows
That sheathed those hills, since into heaven they
sprung.
Ireland indignant flamed; but her wild tongue
Was drowned and lost in that stupendous mirth.
Grave Egypt smiled, her memories among;
But India from her famine-stricken dearth
Gazed with a steady scorn that pierced such boast-
ing's worth.

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7

Rome

Britannia stood amazed; but her clenched hand
Wavered irresolute. For in this place
No truth might be by watchful censor banned,
Nor all her gold one damning fact erase.
Then boomed a voice like echo from the face
Of stern Alaskan cliffs, where glaciers loom,
And bleak winds harp the pines; while at their base
Dark chill seas plunge below, in froth and foam;
And silence held all else, while spoke imperial Rome.

8

"Daughter, such words are framed for mortal men,
Whose minds are shallow, nor remembrance long.
Waste not the time of this assembly, then,
Who know your deeds, with such resultless song.
Your rule indeed is new, our realms among;
For never yet, until you showed us how,
Was empire gained by any but the strong.
The crown you wear on unabashed brow
Is strange of shape indeed;—that will we all allow.

9

"For empire's crown, till you your reign begun
Upon a sturdy folk was always placed,
Who reaped the spoils from subject nations won.
But you from stolen farms your freemen chased,
And made all England one luxurious waste.
Huddled in noisome slums, your people fed
The wheels of giant mills, whose engines raced
Driven by the burning bones of living dead;
Starved from their homes, your best o'er land and ocean sped.

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10

"Sons of your poor as tortured fuel flamed;
Sons of your rich in world-wide exile fared.
Old India by your blessed rule lies maimed;
And Ireland, whom my reverent soldiers spared,
Fearing the Blessed Dead her peace who shared.
Egypt and Persia wither by your blight;
Those African Republics stoutly dared
Defend their lands, till your chivalrous knight
Starved wives and babes of them who bested him in fight.

11

"We are not men, by empty words befooled;
This is the course all empires must pursue.
Never for their own good are conquests ruled,
But for the conqueror's profit—this is true.
Yet all your gains are garnered for a few,
Devouring both your fighters and your foes.
Now come we here to plan some manner new
To build the world again. Our words disclose
How deep we all agree; the desperate need each knows.

12

"Look how the story of each one who speaks
Goes back to Rome, focus of all your years.
Germans and Belgians, Spaniards, Serbians, Greeks,
All trace through me their triumphs and their tears.
Here now sits one whose splendor new appears
Upon the torn horizon, as I shone
Westward upon the world of my compeers.

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When I—O young Republic!—reared a throne,
Then went the world astray. Be not my fault thine own!"

V. THE GREAT POWER.

1

Rome Tells the Origin of Nations

Rome stood tremendous, towering to the sky,
In majesty that dwarfed them all beside.
"China a question asks," she said: "and I
Will dare to answer what none else hath tried.
This is the hour when Destiny must decide
How fares the world forever; life or death
For all the nations on our words abide.
This planet maddens with a poisoned breath
That ye must clear, or die; tis God that beckoneth.

2

"We are the souls of nations great and small;
But there is One who moves among us here
Unseen—as we by men—yet felt by all.
Deeply within us mighty pulses stir
Through ages stronger; rousing doubt and fear
If we are blind indeed; but when our eyes
Wake to the Life that moves us, as a seer
Of mortal men hails us, with awed surprise,
Then fear of that Great Power is gone, and hopes arise.

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3

and the Birth of Worlds

"There was a Hope, before the dust of stars
Formed in eternity, and through the void
Drifted in darkness; till in hurtling wars
Of flaming mist, quick-forming, quick-destroyed,
Vague laws began to dawn. Fire, dust-alloyed
Gave birth to circling systems. Worlds were born
And round tremendous suns swung wide-deployed.
From seas that roared on giant shores forlorn
Life moulded sprang at last; then came our being's morn.

4

"Even as mortal bodies are composed
Of myriad cells, each with dividual span,
But through a conscious unity imposed
Above them, think and speak and move as man,
So were we born, of men, in this vast plan
Whereto the moving aeons ever tend.
And still that hope, which could the star-dust scan
And see huge Order with vague Chaos blend,
Sees yet a greater Life above our lives impend.

5

"This is the curse which wrecks the world with ill;
Even as some men whole nations strive to be,
Robing themselves in autocratic will,
Stifling all thought that dare unblinded see;
And as this always ends in misery;

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So when a nation, blind with lust of power,
Seeks to dethrone that One, greater than we,
And as a tyrant o'er all races tower,
Then burns that Empire-greed, which plagues us
at this hour.

6

" Who then is this, that rises so sublime
Greater than nations, as we are than men?
What nation of the nations, lord of time,
Must we perceive in adoration, then?
Nearest I came of all in mortal ken
To be that commonwealth;—wherefore my story
Takes in you all;—but none of us may pen
That life within ourselves. Ye who are hoary,
Ye who are young—ye know the greatness of that
glory!"

7

Egypt

Then spoke that ancient nation of the Nile
Who through hot centuries, for some sign un-
known
Scanned all the stars, a patient weary while
Still watching for the breaking of the dawn.
Aeons of adoration thrilled her tone
With all the wondering worship poured abroad
In shrines of Thebes or Memphis or of On
Where mid the shaken sistrums, silver-shod,
Dusk prostrate millions prayed to beasts, revealing
God.

8

" When first my tribes into Nile's valley came,
Each bore a totem on its standard spear.

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Ram, falcon, fox or serpent gave its name
To all who did its sacred shape revere.
Forty-and-two my tribes in number were,
Forty-and-two their gods; till all in one
Egypt united was. Then many a year
Nile as Osiris, Horus as the Sun,
Isis the Land they hymned. Then came Akhenaton.

9

"He, my young Pharaoh, dauntless and serene,
Chiselled the shape of every beast adored
Out of the monuments. Where they had been
He carved the glory of the changeless lord,
The Spirit-sun. Himself both priest and bard
He sang and prayed to Him who moves within
Land, Sun and River. But his sole reward
Was cursing and oblivion for his sin.
Thus fare they who too soon such central knowledge win!"

10

Russia

Then Russia sprang impetuous to her feet;
"Well have I learned," she cried, "how dread that crime,
To tell such truth! The ancient years repeat;
Today all nations bend, in every clime,
Abject as were your tribes in olden time,
To totem Eagle, Lion, Fox and Bear.
And when I struggled from war's murky slime
Whereto these beast-gods led, and sought to clear
Our eyes to Truth's pure light — lo, how ye stabbed me here!

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11

"I felt the wondrous presence Rome hath told
Beating in me — for I inherit too
The dream of her old vision to enfold
All races into one. I overthrew
Mouldy czar-trappings that I long outgrew.
Wide to the world I sped a new appeal—
Out of my desperation hope I drew;—
To crush such false beast-worship under heel
And hail that mighty Soul, whose presence all must feel;—

12

"The Soul that is not hemmed by race nor bound,
Whose nation never yet on land or sea
Set up its throne, nor sovereignty has found
Save when I tried to give her home with me.
Then they who swore they fought to make men free
Turned on me with reviling hatred sore—
Because I, sovereign, dared to bow the knee
To her whose splendor all must soon adore,
Whose throne shall stand supreme, —the Nation of the Poor!"

13

Britannia, angered, flashed her stormy eyes:
"This rule is no rule, but destruction sheer!
What shall become of all our majesties
If this new power usurp our proper sphere?
Ye who are gone from earth no longer care;
But what of us, whose course sees yet no end?
Shall we crouch waiting Slavery to appear?
Now know ye what your meaning doth portend;—
Great Powers, stand leagued with me; from Anarchy defend!"

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VI. THE THRONE OF JUDGEMENT.

1

Then sharp division shook them each from each,
Older from younger, mightier from the slight,
Wrangling like children with impetuous speech;
But my eyes fixed upon the central height,
Where a new wonder broke upon my sight.
Upon the peak that first with roseate glow
Answers the morning-star in flaming light
A crystal throne, upon the printless snow
Stood living-vibrant, rich with glorious ebb and flow;

2

So glows an opal, magic from the mines;
Or summer clouds, with struggling lightnings chained,
That veil the moon which full at zenith shines,
While else the sky, with glittering gold inveined,
Shines like new love, with purple wonder stained;
'Twas empty, like the Chalice reverenced well
Whereon Cathedral splendors wide entrained
Declare it holy, ere the Sanctus bell
Hath named it throne of God, wherein his love doth dwell;

3

Without that Chalice all were vain and cold;
Vain chant and anthem, twilight soft and rare,
Censer and cross and constellations old
Whose altar-candles gild the perfumed air,

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Glittering through scented mist like hope through prayer;
For these their beauty, hope and meaning take
From God's true Presence, faith-expected there;
So vain was this assembly on the peak
Without the Throne, wherefrom one should the Answer speak.

4

Before the throne a snowy altar stood,
Whereon all flowers that I had ever seen
Lay pouring forth their perfume as a flood;
From every clime, from chill and shag-browed Maine,
To California, sweet with gales serene,
And where the Gulf's blue waters lave the shore
Of palm-leaved Florida. There blushed the bell
Of morning-glory, fairy dews that bore;
Wistaria, drowsy-sweet, drunken with soft disdain;

5

Magnolias, with corroding touch that die,
Fragrant in purity; gentian and rose;
Azalea and crape myrtle, trembling shy;
Hawthorne and laurel, cherry bloom that snows
Early in spring; wild-root the prairie knows;
Pale jessamine, the sweetest star that breathes;
Arbutus, whom low-lying leaves disclose;
Deep passion-flower, whose heart the sharp thorn sheathes;
Orchids distraught, whose soul mysterious tumult seethes.

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6

In that great tribute every land had part,
And flowers unknown were there, whose censers swung
Through deep primeval forests, or the heart
Of hidden valleys mountain-ringed, where sung
The cool-voiced seraphim, when earth was young,
Where yet the echoes linger, hid from day.
Exhilarant like wine their perfume hung,
But pure like morning sea-breath, clean to sway
Mist-ragged clouds of doubt from heavenly hearts away.

7

Amid those blossoms that to earth belong
The tribute of its life each nation laid;
Music and art and mighty-winged song,
The melody of homes contented made,
Carols that rose where happy children played;
Yet some with shame their offerings let fall;—
The loves and hopes of trusting souls betrayed;—
Red were their hands; yet lo, the hands of all
Seemed blackened as I looked, with mingled blood and gall.

8

Foremost sat one who held her peace unbroken,
Nor on the others gazed, while conflict rolled;
But seemed as if expecting some new token
Upon a weary tangle to unfold.
My heart beat fast, her beauty to behold;
I loved her best of all that glorious host,
Yea, though she strike my name from out her fold;—

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And many not her sons revere her most,
And hail her as earth's hope beyond her furthest coast.

VII. THE CONSECRATION.

1

Now sudden silence struck; the air still bore
The quivering echoes that strong strife released,
As waves that lash a rocky storm-bound shore
Thunder and plunge long after storms have ceased,
While down the sky the shattered clouds far-chased
Still flame with distant lightning. And with fear
All silent at the throne's white splendor gazed,
Where each had hoped to sit. But gathering there
Strange flames, with clouds enwrapped, now wondrously appear.

2

Chaldaea

Then rose with awe one watcher to her feet;
Chaldea, seer of nations, was her name,
Who in that ancient valley had her seat
Where old Mesopotamia marked the frame
Of gorgeous constellations wheel and flame
Against palm-bordered skies of cloudless blue,
While past gray cities of primeval fame
Euphrates, wed with Tigris, proudly drew
Imperial wealth and power, long splendid centuries through.

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3

"Lo, while we speak," she cried, "the Answer given!
O summit of the world's long-waited hour!
We stand here by conflicting passions driven
As children quarrel for disputed power,
While even now among us One doth tower
Splendid beyond our utmost dream of light,
Whose shape I dimly see begin to flower
Within those fearful clouds of threatening night
That cloak a glorious Form—Earth's consummated might!"

4

Down on her knees that ancient prophet fell;
Down bowed the elder nations one by one;
The little countries gladly knelt as well;
Reluctantly the mighty, borne upon
Resistlessly by that constraining spell
Whose strength they feared indeed but could not quell.
Darkly the gloom impended; muttering tolled
Sky-shaking thunder, like a tocsin bell;
Then burst those blackening clouds, like heaven asunder rolled.

5

But like a child, outworn and overtried
By some great coronation's long-drawn strain,
With shouts and trumpets, endless pomp and pride,
I laid my head upon her breast again.
Yet like great music thrilled through every vein

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—Ah, how the sound from fear the world shall purge!—
That "Peace be with you!" and their "Peace, Amen!"
According rolled, like one low-thundering surge
From drowsing summer seas upon the slumbering verge.

6

Then spoke that Voice; meanwhile the music dwelling
In solemn Largo, trembling grand and clear,
Like one I heard from deep-toned organ swelling
As if adream, through gloom rich-tint and rare,
While Rome her full pontificals outpoured
To risen eyes, at Easter, of her Lord.
One spoke,—not from dead centuries, greed-enshrined,
But for earth's multitudes, long bound and blind,
Who hail through hell and hate long-hidden hope restored.

7

The International Speaks

"To every age a messenger is sent,
To keep the purpose of all ages clear;
Far centering to that same sublime intent
Wherewith the worlds began in space appear.
Each one of you must this commission bear,
At some time speaking with my greater voice,
Whose utterance all mankind oft groans to hear.
When one that message speaks, the worlds rejoice;
And now most desperate need prays for another choice.

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8

" Here has the peril of such choosing been,
Defeating oft the purpose of my will;
That when one speaks my words to waiting men,
And men exult, to hear that message thrill,—
Then comes ambitious pride, whose graspings kill.
Like one whom men with sovereign rule entrust
In perilous times, who seeks that post to fill
Beyond the need, transforming good to ill;
So nations greedy turn from prophecy to lust.

9

" Thence has destruction come; for those I bade
Speak for mankind brought mankind to their thrall.
Now in this horror of the world gone mad,
One have I chosen from among you all,
My nations from this cursèd greed to call.
As Egypt from her tribes one self became,
As this Republic in her council-hall
Mid eight-and-forty daughters sits supreme,
So shall I dwell with you, all one; this is my dream.

10

" Now, O thou young Republic girt with stars,
Whose spacious territories hailed us here,
Thou wert God's trust, from hate-recurrent wars
To show the way; how peace may persevere;
How men be cleansed of hate and greed and fear.
How federated states in one may dwell
Seeking one good through ends of earth brought near.
Thy words indeed are high; but guard thou well;
By deeds belying words, thy predecessors fell.

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11

"Perplexed, the nations on thy conduct gaze.
Thy words like music on their hearing break,
But what they see fills them with sore amaze;—
The scourge, the tar, the gibbet and the stake;
Boys slain in torture for their conscience' sake;
Men chained untried in life-long dungeons foul;—
While others gladly thee for leader take,
Art thou indeed unfit thyself to rule?—
Blind fools, savage with power, thy speech and thought control.

12

"Bloodletting from her craze Germania cured;
That burning fever leaps across the sea.
Once having lifted thine all-glittering sword,
Its shining glory hath enchanted thee.
What profits it the world, if thou destroy
One empire's madness, if while that is done,
A worser madness drives thee to employ
The same foul means to seize both earth and sun?
Thus has thou lost all wars, even if this war be won.

13

"See how forgotten nations, long oppressed,
Thy lightest word as their salvation greet.
Their hopes on thee, like sun on Rainier's crest,
Robe all the world in promise at thy feet.
Now strikes the hour when trust and tempter meet!
Expunge this empire-fever from thy veins!
If thou the old disastrous round repeat,

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If thy rule fail, as fell all former reigns,
Then must I seek, who else to lift that hope
remains!"

14

Then that Great Power, which is the Soul of Man,
Heir of all years, Time's purpose all-revealing,
The Bride of God, the Reason of his Plan,
Upon my Mother's head God's mission sealing
Her right hand laid, and to the flaming skies
That shone intense and still, lifted her splendid
eyes.—
Ah, Mother, with what fearful love appealing
We prayed thee then, that for the whole world's
healing
Thou worthily redeem the trust that on thee lies!

15

America Refuses the Choice

But—ah, the shame that wrapt us like a flood
To see thee halt, and hesitate, and choose!
Horror that froze our hearts and stopped our blood
To see thee, Mother, that great hope refuse!
Lending thy name and power to foul abuse,
Thy voice the doom of truth, the knell of right!
That glory which thy early days diffuse
Sold into darkness, mocked into a blight!
God! Who could turn that dawn into so black a
night!

16

Like trumpets calling to the day of doom,
With scorn of all the ages rang that Voice;

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" On harlot cheeks the tint of youthful bloom
Tokens disease and death. Such is thy choice!
Thine was the hope, the failure thine.—Give room!
Here stands my Messenger, chosen and true.
Russia, sole brightness in this murky gloom,
Take this high place, of faithfulness the due.
Nations, behold the dawn! Russia brings light to you!"

17

Then gathered all the light upon them there,
Centering from all the heavens, deep and clear,
Dimming all else; till on my failing sight
Drawn up and lost into that awful light
Whose name is TRUTH—behold, they disappear!
Now on the Eastern hills the glorious day
Broke slowly; and in silence, eyes all bright
Homeward they went, each on a several way;
And last we two, alone. In sleep again I lay.

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